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The English Church in the Sixteenth Century from the Accession of Henry VIII. to the Death of Mary. By JAMES GAIRDNER. (London: Macmillan and Co.; New York: The Macmillan Co. 1902. Pp. xi, 430.)

THE fourth volume in the *History of the English Church*, edited by Stephens and Hunt, is written by a scholar distinguished for his knowledge of the state papers of the period with which the volume deals. We get, as might therefore be expected, some detail not easily found elsewhere, especially in regard to negotiations with the Pope about the King's divorce and in regard to the influence of the political situation of the continent upon specific acts of religious policy in England. There are, however, no novelties of fact, and the varieties of opinion, sympathy, and prejudice were long ago exhausted. What was done is not a matter of dispute, but there is little agreement about the forces at work in society, the motives and aims of the actors, the value of the results. Gairdner writes of the whole matter with quiet but intense feeling, and his comments make the book a document illustrative of our own time. He does not enjoy his story. He seems to be contesting point by point the changes which were made in an affair too early for his own participation, and yet he seems satisfied with the result. The outcome was beneficent, but the process was reprehensible. Let us take the case of the legislation of 1529 which aimed to correct the evils of capricious probate fees, mortuaries, and pluralities. Gairdner recognizes that the action taken was in the right direction, but "the spirit of the whole legislation was bad, and was clearly intended to punish the only power in the land which could be trusted to denounce wrong in high places with something like authority." This is a characteristic passage. For Gairdner the King's shameful passions caused the changes in the church.

Save for the Ten Articles of 1536, Henry's policy makes a whole of consistent meaning. With thoroughly Catholic conceptions of religion he reconstructed the administration of the church. He overthrew the sacerdotal *imperium in imperio*, brought the church under lay and national control, suppressed the monasteries, and strengthened the normal diocesan system. Now from Gairdner one would gather that no consistent policy was in mind. He conceives the King as driven from point to point by a series of situations all evoked by his failure to get an ecclesiastical license to marry Anne Boleyn. Having thrown off the Pope and taken matters into his own hands, the King finds himself in one desperate emergency after another. His self-will in the first bad business becomes a brutal tyranny over a resistant nation. To maintain himself against conservative factions he coquets now and then with Lollard tendencies at home or Lutherans on the continent. He holds in check the forces thus used, but the heretical tendency thus encouraged has its triumph under the weak government of Edward.

In tracing the whole process to the King's marriage project, Gairdner persistently minimizes the operation of other forces. He is not one of those who recognize subconscious principles of social change, and he

has had little interest in the facts on which Beazley bases the interesting opinion that "the lay power in the state — this, and not reformed doctrine, or liberty of conscience, or Catholic antiquity — was the ultimate social principle of the struggle" (Traill's *Social England*, III. 51). Some of the evidences of a social problem are passed over with a sneer at pecuniary interests. Wolsey's plans for reforms are not mentioned, and Cromwell figures as the mere tool of a capricious king. Gairdner minimizes also the influence of that group of reformatory spirits with whose ideals we are made acquainted by Seebohm's *Oxford Reformers*. It is true that this group had no plan of legislative change, but it is short-sighted not to recognize that the royal policy had a basis in such a new spirit in the church. The royal policy did not adopt all their ideals, but one cannot fail to recognize in them a current of thought preparing the nation for a Christianity conceived by means of Scripture rather than by means of scholastic system, and relieved of those superstitions which were maintained by the monastic orders. In the first place, if we wish to estimate the Lutheran influence on the English people in Henry's time we shall have to forsake Gairdner and consult Froude or the Benedictine Gasquet. Gairdner treats the Lutheran influence disdainfully as something peculiar to the lower classes. Of these humble radicals he thinks as a cultivated pagan in the early centuries thought of the Christians. While he scoffs at the "pious pretences" of state papers due to the hateful king, he is severe on Foxe for scorning the episcopal charges of gross impiety against heretics. "This is surely," says Gairdner, "a most extraordinary way of dealing with historical evidence." Would Gairdner accept accusations of witchcraft as historical evidence?

Insistence on the royal initiative blurs some of the facts. Gairdner obscures the difference between the articles of 1536 and 1539 by representing that the earlier articles taught transubstantiation. That is certainly not the case. The wording was closely modeled on that of the Augsburg Confession, and it seems clear that this temporary accommodation to Lutheran views was due to the urgency of Cromwell and certain bishops. Gairdner himself notes that this party began to exceed the King's authority. In the Six Articles, however, it was the King who spoke, and not these advisers. The severity of the penalty attached in 1539 to the denial of transubstantiation measures the energy of the King's dissent from Lutheran views as he had become better acquainted with them. It is made evident by this episode that one group of counsellors had a more marked policy of theological change, and we are entitled to doubt the notion which Gairdner seems to cherish, that innovation was alien to the English spirit of the time and came through the subserviency of leaders to the blind caprice of a tyrannous king. Dr. Gairdner's last chapter gladly accepts an historical result which he has been representing as deplorably begun and never consciously pursued. But, after all, his island belonged to a world in which momentous change was operating. A little more knowledge of the continent might furnish some perspective.

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